

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method of reinforcing or baffling a structure of an automotive vehicle with a structural assembly, comprising:

- (a) providing a structural assembly including:
  - i) a first member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface;
  - ii) a second member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface; and
  - iii) an expandable material intermediate the first member and the second member, the expandable material being different from a first material forming the first member and a second material forming the second member, the first material being the same as or different than the second material;
- (b) positioning the structural assembly within a cavity defined by the automotive vehicle structure such that the second surfaces of the first and second members respectively oppose a first surface and a second surface that at least partially define the cavity; and
- (c) expanding the expandable material between the first surfaces of the first and second members thereby moving the first member away from the second member and moving the second surface of the first member and the second surface of the second member ~~first and second members~~ respectively toward the first surface and the second surface that at least partially define the cavity.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the first material and the second material include at least one of a plastic material, a polymeric material, a metal material or a combination thereof.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the step of expanding the expandable material includes contacting at least one of the second surfaces of first and second members with at least one of the first and second surface that at least partially defined the cavity.

Claim 24 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the structural assembly further includes an adhesive material disposed upon the second surface of the first and second members.

Claim 25 (previously presented): A method as in claim 24 further comprising expanding the adhesive material and adhering the adhesive material to the first and second surface that at least partially define the cavity wherein the expandable material is configured to experience greater expansion than the adhesive material.

Claim 26 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the second surface that at least partially defines said cavity is part of a metal panel of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 27 (currently amended): A method as in claim 21 wherein the first and the second surface that at least partially define the cavity are both part of a single component.

Claim 28 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the first and second member each include one or more ribs.

Claim 29 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the first member includes a protrusion extending away from the first surface of the first member and wherein the second member includes a cavity at least partially defined in the first surface of the second member, the cavity of the second member configured for receiving the protrusion while said expandable material is in its pre-expanded state and the cavity of the second member having therein at least a portion of the expandable material.

Claim 30 (previously presented): A method as in claim 21 wherein the step of positioning the structural assembly within the cavity of the structure includes fastening the assembly to the structure of the vehicle with a fastener prior to expansion of the expandable material.

Claim 31 (currently amended): A method of reinforcing or baffling a structure of an automotive vehicle with a structural assembly, comprising:

- (a) providing a structural assembly including:
  - i) a first member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface;
  - ii) a second member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface;
  - iii) an expandable material intermediate the first member and the second member, the expandable material being different from a first material forming the first member and a second material forming the second member, the first material being the same or different than the second material;
  - iv) one or more fasteners assisting in attaching the first and second member together;

(b) positioning the structural assembly within a cavity defined by the automotive vehicle structure such that the second surfaces of the first and second members respectively oppose a first surface and a second surface that at least partially define the cavity;

(c) expanding the expandable material between the first surfaces of the first and second members thereby promoting connection of the second surfaces of the first and second members with the first surface and the second surface that at least partially define the cavity.

Claim 32 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the one or more fasteners allow movement of the first member and the second member toward and away from each other prior to or during expansion of the expandable material.

Claim 33 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the step of expanding the expandable material includes contacting at least one of the second surfaces of first and second members with at least one of the first and second surface that at least partially defined the cavity.

Claim 34 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the structural assembly further includes an adhesive material disposed upon the second surface of the first and second members.

Claim 35 (previously presented): A method as in claim 34 further comprising expanding the adhesive material and adhering the adhesive material to the first and second surface that at least partially define the cavity wherein the expandable material is configured to experience greater expansion than the adhesive material.

Claim 36 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the first and second member each include one or more ribs.

Claim 37 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the first member includes a protrusion extending away from the first surface of the first member and wherein the second member includes a cavity at least partially defined in the first surface of the second member, the cavity of the second member configured for receiving the protrusion while said expandable material is in its pre-expanded state and the cavity of the second member having therein at least a portion of the expandable material.

Claim 38 (previously presented): A method as in claim 31 wherein the step of positioning the structural assembly within the cavity of the structure includes fastening the assembly to the structure of the vehicle with an additional fastener prior to expansion of the expandable material.

Claim 39 (currently amended): A method of reinforcing a structure of an automotive vehicle with a structural assembly, comprising:

- (a) providing a structural assembly including:
  - i) a first member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface;
  - ii) a second member having a first surface generally opposite a second surface;
  - iii) a reinforcement material intermediate the first member and the second member, the reinforcement material being different from a first material forming the first member and a second material forming the second member, the first material being the same or different than the second material;
  - iv) an adhesive material disposed upon second surface of the first and second members; and
  - v) the first material and the second material include at least one of a plastic material, a polymeric material, a metal material or a combination thereof;
- (b) positioning the structural assembly within a cavity defined by the automotive vehicle structure such that the second surfaces of the first and second members respectively oppose a first surface and a second surface that at least partially define the cavity;
- (c) expanding the reinforcement material between the first surfaces of the first and second members thereby promoting connection of the second surfaces of the first and second members with the first surface and the second surface that at least partially define the cavity; and
- (d) adhering the adhesive material to the first surface and the second surfaces that at least partially define the cavity.

Claim 40 (previously presented): A method as in claim 39 wherein the first and second member each include one or more ribs.

Claim 41(previously presented): A method as in claim 39 wherein the first member includes a protrusion extending away from the first surface of the first member and wherein the second member includes a cavity at least partially defined in the first surface of the second member, the cavity of the second member configured for receiving the protrusion while said reinforcement material is in its pre-expanded state and the cavity of the second member having therein at least a portion of the reinforcement material.

Claim 42 (previously presented): A method as in claim 39 wherein the step of positioning the structural assembly within the cavity of the structure includes fastening the assembly to the structure of the vehicle with a fastener prior to expansion of the reinforcement material.

Claim 43 (new): A method as in claim 21 wherein the first surface of the first member is substantially coextensive with the first surface of the second member.

Claim 44 (new): A method as in claim 31 wherein the first surface of the first member is substantially coextensive with the first surface of the second member.